

Scientific reports on cigarettes-lung cancer theory and other health topics were published.

WORLD TELEGRAM
New York, New York
September 14, 1962

Cancer Produced in Animals By 2 Common Human Viruses

By JOHN TROAN

Scrapps-Howard Newspapers

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14.—Two viruses commonly harbored by humans, including one linked to colds and sore throats, have produced cancer in animals.

It is the first time any human virus has been proved to cause any kind of cancer. But it does not yet establish that these "bugs" produce the dread disease in humans.

The organisms belong to the so-called adenovirus family. One, Type 12, has been isolated from persons who have colds associated with fever and sore throats — though scientists aren't sure it is the cause of such illness. The other, Type 18, doesn't seem to stir any symptoms.

By shooting these viruses into baby hamsters, researchers in Houston, Tex., and at the federal government's National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., have produced chest and liver tumors.

The Houston team, which accomplished the feat first, said today this could mean people can get cancer from viruses which ordinarily are picked up in childhood and then seem to be asleep in the body for years.

Sleeping Viruses

Scientists have been speculating some human cancers might be triggered by sleeping viruses which are roused into action by excess radiation, chemicals or other provoking agents.

The Houston researchers are Dr. John J. Trentin, a Baylor University biologist; Dr. Yoshiro Yabe, a Japanese virologist; and Dr. Grant Taylor, a University of Texas pediatrician. The NIH team is headed by Dr. Robert J. Huebner, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Some of the results were published today in Science, official journal of the American Assn. for the Advancement of Science. The others were elicited through telephone interviews.

After failing to produce animal cancers with such common childhood viruses as chicken pox and measles, the Houston team turned to "the human orphan viruses."

Isolated From Humans

"These," they explained, "are viruses that have been isolated from humans but whose disease manifestations are unknown — viruses in search of disease."

"Cancer may well be the disease that some or many of these viruses are at present orphan to."

Among the "orphan viruses" are 18 types of adenoviruses. Of the first nine tested, eight failed to produce animal tumors.

But the other, Type 12, caused cancers in 67 of 83 hamsters. In contrast, only one of 1170 animals which didn't get such viruses developed cancer.

Shortly afterward, the work was duplicated by Dr. Huebner at NIH. He then went on to show that adenovirus Type 18 also produces cancer in animals — and the Houston researchers have confirmed this.

Focus Attention

The Houston doctors said these studies "focus attention" on the possibility such viruses — as well as others which attack people — might cause human cancer. They said this "should be seriously considered and investigated."

They added that if such viruses prove to cause human cancer on a delayed basis, there is "real hope" a vaccine could be made to knock them out.

Preliminary blood tests on 700 patients at Houston's M. D. Anderson Hospital indicated 46 percent had been bitten by the Type 12 virus at some time in their lives. This shows how common it is.

The work is being supported by the NIH, American Cancer Society, El Paso (Tex.) Better Health Foundation and the Greater Longview (Tex.) United Fund.

1005150613